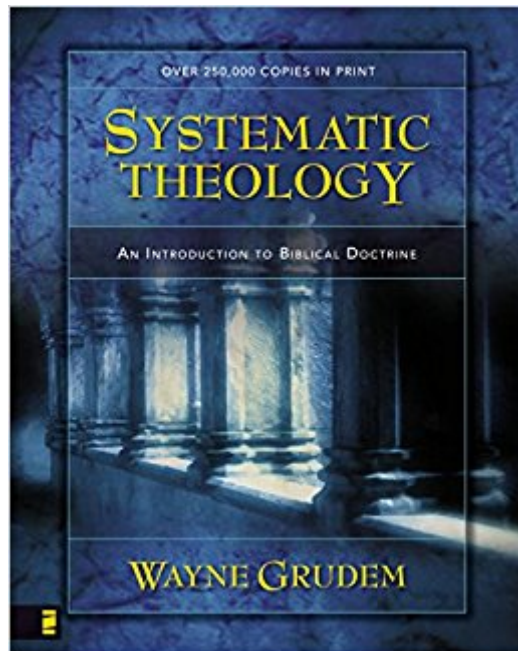


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Systematic Theology: An Introduction To Biblical Doctrine (Making Sense Of Series)



Synopsis

The Christian church has a long tradition of systematic theology, that is, studying theology and doctrine organized around fairly standard categories such as the Word of God, redemption, and Jesus Christ. This introduction to systematic theology has several distinctive features: - A strong emphasis on the scriptural basis for each doctrine and teaching - Clear writing, with technical terms kept to a minimum - A contemporary approach, treating subjects of special interest to the church today - A friendly tone, appealing to the emotions and the spirit as well as the intellect - Frequent application to life - Resources for worship with each chapter - Bibliographies with each chapter that cross-reference subjects to a wide range of other systematic theologies.

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Customer Reviews

Though I have found immense help in Dr. Grudem's book over the past months, I have post-poned a review in order to get a complete reading of it first. Now that I have read it all, I can say that this may be the best systematic theology written in the 20th century. Dr. Grudem combines theological

insight, practical application, and faithful exegesis of Scripture with simple, uncomplicated language and clear thinking. The result? The most readable and informative Systematic Theology one could desire. Every chapter starts with a question and ends with application questions and a hymn! Education is turned into exaltation over and over again as Grudem moves you from deep thinking to appropriate feeling about the greatest truths in the universe. The arrangement of topics is typical. Grudem covers the doctrine of God, man, Christ, salvation, church, and last things. Like any book of this magnitude, it has strengths and weaknesses. But the strengths are more than the weaknesses. The section on theology proper (the doctrine of God) is outstanding. Grudem's explanation of the Trinity is very helpful avoiding both modalism and arianism. His treatment of God's character and attributes is especially good, arguing strongly against the "open" view of God and process theology. The chapters on Creation and Providence are also very well-done containing lengthy Scriptural arguments for his position. His soteriology is Reformed and not much different than you would get from Berkhof or Murray. Still good, though. Grudem spends much time discussing the Holy Spirit (though the chapters are scattered around the book and not in one section) and especially the church.

Although I personally disagree with a number of the positions held in this book, and might agree more with other Systematic Theologies, this one is by far the best. It truly is head and shoulders above any of the other Systematic Theologies I have surveyed--including Hodge, Erickson, Wiley, Miley, Geisler, Williams and others--although each has its value. First, is the design and scope of the book. It is intentionally designed to help clarify positions held by those who believe the Bible is authoritative. This is different from Erickson, for example, who spends a lot of energy interacting with neo-Orthodox and other liberal perspectives. Grudem's approach is ideal for pastors and laymen. Handle challenging issues without getting off into extraneous detail. You go right to the crux of the issue. In addition, Grudem's tone feels kind. You really feel that he is instructing you in love. As many have pointed out, it really has a devotional quality to it in many places, including appropriate hymns at the end of each chapter. Look for that in another theology! Second, it has excellent helps. For example, he indexes many of the major Systematic Theologies at the end of each chapter. This allows you to very easily compare his perspective with others, and do deeper research. Third, it's broad yet concise. I really feel that with this book on my shelf, I have access to the crux of a lot of major doctrinal issues. I don't need a pile of "four views" books. Grudem covers many many issues from the atonement to miracles and the baptism of the holy spirit. Fourth, it is truly a Biblical approach. It's not just a doctrinaire polemic about pet positions.

I have given this work by Wayne Grudem 5 stars not because I agree word for word with everything he espouses here, because I don't. I am of the view that theology, as a discipline, is like any other discipline in being a human endeavor, and therefore, is fallible. When reviewing works of theology, I believe in being careful about not expecting any theological work to approach a level of infallibility that only Scripture can ever attain. But in reading and reviewing theological material, I do expect the author to put forth an intelligent, logical, rational, persuasive BIBLICAL presentation that hangs together internally as well as biblically. So despite my reservations and disagreements with some of what Grudem puts forth here, I think it deserves 5 stars because in my view, this work gets the job done. There are a number of clear strengths to this book. First, this book is by far the most accessible systematic treatment of theology I've ever read. If there is any systematic theology book that theology novices could really sink their teeth into, this is it. This book, while effectively dealing with the many difficult theological issues that need to be dealt with in any adequate systematic theology, avoids drowning these difficult issues in difficult terminology that too many systematic theologies wrongly assume are common terms that non-theology focused Christians understand and don't need defining. This is what makes so many systematic theologies inaccessible to most Christians.

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